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The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA



Queen's University at Kingston

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FAREWELL SERMON

PREACHED IN

ST. GEORGE'S FREE CHURCH,

PAISLEY,

ON THE AFTERNOON OF SABBATH, 23rd MARCH, 1845,

BY THE REV. ROBERT BURNS, D.D.



T O R O N T O :

PRINTED AND SOLD AT THE BANNER OFFICE.

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PREFATORY NOTICE.

Circumstances having put it out of my power to comply with the wish of friends at Paisley, that I should print my Farewell Sermon before leaving Scotland, I have endeavoured to follow out that wish by devoting part of my leisure time on the voyage to the preparation of the manuscript for the press at Toronto. My design is to send it to my much-loved brethren and friends, as a small token of remembrance endeared by distance. The wide Atlantic now separates me from those to whom, for more than thirty years, I stood in the relation of Pastor, and whose best interests are still near my heart. While I write these lines, the waves of the mighty deep are rolling around us. We are entering the great Gulph of St. Lawrence. A few days are expected to bring us within sight of some of the most magnificent displays of the majesty of God. Already have we witnessed his wonders in the great deep. Hitherto he hath held us in the hollow of his hand. Amid the howling of the storm, and the crashing of icebergs, we have been mercifully preserved. The prayers of our ship's company have regularly ascended with united voice before the throne, morning and evening; and in these we have remembered our friends at home, as they, we believe, have remembered us. May He who sitteth on the floods reign in their hearts and in ours. May his testimonies, which excel in faithfulness, be our united inheritance in this the house of our pilgrimage; and may His omnipotent grace establish in each heart and perfect that "holiness which becometh his house forever."

GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE, }
May 1st, 1845. }

FAREWELL SERMON.

“FINALLY, BRETHR^N, FAREWELL. BE PERFECT, BE OF GOOD COMFORT, BE OF ONE MIND, LIVE IN PEACE; AND THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE SHALL BE WITH YOU.”—2 *Corinthians*, xiii. 11.

Paul had written two letters of considerable length to the members of the church at Corinth; and as he began them both with a prayer that “grace and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ” might be with them, so he closes both with that comprehensive benediction which all the churches have by silent agreement embodied in their public service,—“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” Such affectionate wishes and prayers are not at all inconsistent with faithfulness in the discharge of duty; for our Apostle had, in the course of these Epistles, found cause to mingle admonition, and even sharp reproof, with his expressions of affection. The church at Corinth was first planted by Paul himself, and for the period of eighteen months its members had enjoyed the benefits of his personal presence amongst them. He was succeeded in the charge by Apollos “mighty in the scriptures;” while Aquila and Priscilla aided him by their united labours. Notwithstanding these high advantages, false teachers troubled the church. Party spirit divided its members. Corruptions, both in doctrine and in discipline, defaced its beauty. Heathen courts were appealed to in the unseemly strife among Christians, and enemies were led to speak reproachfully of Christ. St. Paul, in a spirit of godly displeasure and faithful rebuke, has in these inspired epistles, condensed in one the precepts and admonitions which proved so profitable to those for whom they were

originally designed, and which remain as an invaluable storehouse to the visible church of God.

In the words of the text, we have the “summing up” of the whole. Sweet are the accents of heaven-inspired love issuing from the lips of a holy messenger of the cross. The spirit of his Master breathed in him. A holy love to their immortal souls ; a tender anxiety for their spiritual progress ; a noble-minded zeal for the purity of the church ; a jealousy for the honor of Christ ;—these are the elements which here centre as in one : And “these things are written for our learning,” that as individual members of christian societies, and as a branch of the Church of the living God which he hath purchased with his own blood, we may truly abound “in all holy conversation and godliness.”

I. When the Apostle exhorts the Corinthian brethren to “*be perfect*,” he just repeats in other words the sentiment which he had uttered at the ninth verse of this chapter : “This also we wish, even your perfection.” In his ardent wishes for the spiritual benefit of the believing Hebrews, the Apostle proposes “to leave the principles” or first elements “of the doctrine of Christ, and go on unto perfection,” in order that each of them may be established in the doctrines of grace, and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, and “that every one of them may show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope.”* In his epistle to the churches of Colosse, the Apostle thus expresses himself : “Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may be perfect and complete in all the will of God.”† This was the object of his prayers, and these prayers are described in language that beautifully indicates their energetic earnestness. The man wrestled with God ; and, like Jacob, he wrestled not for an unattainable blessing. It is true, perfection, in the literal sense of the term, can be affirmed of Him only in whom all excellence centres in the highest possible degree. But there is a

* Heb. vi. 1, 11, 12. † Col. iv. 12.

relative perfection which is not only attainable by Christians, but which they are bound to seek after. Even this relative perfection indeed they never attain to on earth, for the Church below is the Church militant. And yet it is a perfection which they are to keep steadily in view, as the object of all their aims, and as essential to their complete felicity. They must seek to be *fully established* in the faith, and hope, and holiness, of the Gospel. They must not satisfy themselves with slender progress and puny attainments. They must avail themselves of all divinely-appointed means in order that they may grow in grace and in knowledge ; that they may live more near to the great source of all mercy and love ; that they may obtain, day after day, more deeply-affecting views of the glory of Christ ; that their impressions of the enormity of all transgression may be deepened ; that their sense of the utter worthlessness of the world, and the pleasures of it, may be rendered more acute ; and that the grand realities of eternity may be brought to bear upon them with a livelier and a holier influence. In connexion with this exercise of diligence in the use of means, there must be a growing earnestness in prayer for the gracious communications of the Holy Spirit, by which alone can believers be enlightened in their views of truth and invigorated in their graces of holiness. Moreover, there must be exercised a holy jealousy over themselves ; a habitual watchfulness against temptation ; a constant circumspection. With all this, there must be a growing fruitfulness in all good works ; “For herein,” says Christ to his people, “is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.” This is Christian establishment—“And this also we pray, even your perfection.”

But Paul addresses the Corinthian members as forming a Church, or collected society of harmonious worshippers. In this view, the duty here enjoined is that which is incumbent on every Church as a divinely-constituted body ; namely, to seek its complete organization and its matured growth. The Church of Corinth stood peculiarly in need of such an admonition as this—“Be perfect.” Erroneous opinions

had crept in amongst them ; therefore must they be careful to maintain sound doctrine. Corruptions in discipline had been gradually superinduced ; therefore must they be careful to “ put away from them that wicked thing.” The holy ordinance of the Supper had been disgraced by vile intemperance ; therefore must they seek “ to be judged of the Lord that they may not be condemned with the world.” Vice of every name had its powerful attractions and patrons in the large commercial city where they dwelt ; therefore, as Satan’s seat was there, they must seek to have it overturned, and the throne of God and of his holiness, set up in its place. A high standard of purity must they rear, and to that standard must all the members be conformed. “ Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, forever.”

The Church of our fathers has of late undergone a great and a blessed change. Truths which had well-nigh been buried amid worldly attachments, have been brought out to the blaze of day. The schemes of worldly policy to oppress the Church, and to make her pander to secular interest, have been successfully resisted. The rights of Zion’s King have been scripturally asserted, while the blood-bought privileges of Zion’s children have been triumphantly vindicated. To the Church of our martyred ancestors thus redeemed from her bondage, the command is given—“ Be perfect.” To you, my dearly-beloved brethren, as a branch of that Church, is the precept addressed—“ Be perfect.” Study your principles thoroughly—seek for them in the treasury of the Bible. Entertain high and commanding views of the Headship of Christ and his peerless rights. Listen not to the childish plea that the points in controversy are trifling. Try them by the test of heaven’s revealed will, and look on them as reflected in the living light and flame of the bush which burnt without being consumed. While your congregation is fully organized, and its office-bearers well appointed, let every man, whether in office or not, seek to do his duty. Aim at a high standard of Scripture doctrine and of Christian liberality. Forget not that the success of every scheme depends on the zeal, the unanimity, and the

vigour with which individual effort is applied. A congregation whose elders and deacons are faithful, active, and prayerful—whose Sabbath-School Teachers are well-instructed, pious, and punctual—whose catechumens are ever ready to wait on the instructions of their pastor—and whose families are cheered by the voice of melody and salvation from their happy abodes,—such a congregation is in a fair way of realizing the import of the Apostle's command ; and the Church which is composed of such congregations, is, beyond doubt, part and parcel of that great Christian temple, against which “the gates of Hell shall never prevail.”

II. Of the members of the Primitive Church it is said, that they “walked in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and were multiplied.”* Paul, we apprehend, has a direct reference to this when he exhorts the Corinthian Church to “*be of good comfort.*” Believers in general live below their privileges. I question much if even their expectations partake of that expansive range—that heavenly bearing—that holy sublimity of tone—which the testimony of God and the great and precious promises of the everlasting covenant do unquestionably warrant. There is among believers too great a tendency to look upon the Gospel as on something future ; something that resembles a light shining from afar, and reflecting rays only few and feeble on their present path. Now, it is one peculiar excellence of the Gospel that it speaks peace to the soul even now ; and that it scatters many blessings on the road that leads to heaven. A clear evidence of this is derived not only from such exhortations as those of the Apostle, “Rejoice in the Lord always ; and again I say, rejoice ;” but from those very numerous places of the New Testament where “comfort” is specially spoken of as the object of prayer, or as matter of actual enjoyment. In praying for the Romans, St. Paul thus pours forth his soul : “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.”† In the epistle from which our text is taken he

* Acts ix. 31. † Rom. xv. 13.

thus gives thanks for those present delights which cheer amid the trials of life : “ Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort ; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may have to comfort those which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God :” “ and our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the suffering, so shall ye be also of the consolation.”* “ Therefore,” says he, in another place, “ we are comforted in your comfort.”† It is interesting also to observe that in several passages of the Apostolic writings edification and comfort are placed in immediate connexion, thus indicating that wherever there is realized Christian establishment in the faith and hope of the Gospel, or “ perfection” as it is commonly termed, there a high measure of comfort and joy may be reasonably expected ; and on the other hand, that wherever we find a believer walking in the “ joy of the Lord” as “ his strength,” there we are warranted to expect also an established and matured disciple. Paul, in addressing the Thessalonians, speaks of “ sending Timotheus his brother and minister of God, and a fellow-labourer,” for the two-fold object “ of establishing them and comforting them concerning their faith.”‡ And in perfect harmony with this resolution, he exhorts them in the following chapter to act upon the principle of such an union ; “ Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”|| In his second epistle to the same church, he thus beautifully embraces these kindred objects in one comprehensive prayer : “ Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace ; comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good work and work.”§

The precept in our text, “ Be of good comfort,” is complied with, when the members of Christian Churches

* 2 Cor. i. 3, 4, 7. † 2 Cor. vii. 13. ‡ 1 Thess. iii. 2.

|| 1 Thess. iv. 11. § 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.

practically recognise the Holy Spirit the Comforter as the source of all their joy. In those early times believers in exact proportion as they were faithful, might expect the severity of trial. Hence arose the duty of adhering closely to the precept of their beloved Master, to lean on the spirit of promise, whose wisdom and grace were designed to guide and sustain them amid all trials. We are not exposed to persecutions in the same sense with the primitive church ; but trials, more or less severe, await us ; and in the midst of them all we are commanded to be of "good comfort." We must steadily abstain from seeking consolation in forbidden paths. We must view all trials as coming from God, and as designed to sweeten to us the glorious Gospel. We must commit all our concerns into the hands of Him who ordereth every thing in wisdom, and by earnest prayer for the Spirit the Comforter, realize the blessedness of sanctified affliction.

But the precept has to do with the Church as a collective body, and in this view the Corinthians were enjoined to encourage one another in the common faith. There were many things in their own conduct and its results, over which a scriptural and pure discipline might well sigh. And yet there was much in the position of their Church to inspire mutual comfort. Paul's affectionate counsels to them had been eminently successful. The evil thing had been promptly put away. Corruptions in administration had been removed. Christ had been cheerfully recognised as governor over his own house ; and his faithful followers, "knit together in love," had abundant cause given them to edify and comfort one another. *Our* Church has passed through a similar process of revival ; and our duty is the same. We have had our trials, and we shall have many more. The greatest of all will arise from our own want of faithfulness. But if we strive against all causes of declension ; if we keep by the written word as our rule ; if we resist any appeal that may be made to self-interest and worldly policy ; if we contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints ; if we cherish an enlarged and liberal and truly

catholic spirit ; if we act as becomes an evangelistic Church in seeking the world's salvation ; and if we adorn the doctrine we profess by holy living,—then may we bid defiance to all the snares of the adversary, and be of “good comfort,” as the honored servants of the Lord of Sabaoth.

III. “*Be of one mind.*” Our blessed Lord in his intercessory prayer, assigned a very high place to unity in his Church. “Neither,” says he, “neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe in me through their word ; that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us ; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”* His Apostles follow the example of their beloved Master. “Be of the same mind one towards another.”† “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus.”‡ “Endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.”|| “If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies ; fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, *of one mind.*”§ The Church at Corinth had special need of the exhortation, “Be of one mind.” Divisions had crept in amongst them, and a spirit of sectarian bigotry led them to attach themselves to different leaders, as if they were not all marshalled under one banner. In connexion with these divisions, grievous errors had been superinduced on the simplicity of the Gospel, to mar its beauty and to beguile unstable souls. Judaizing teachers had successfully attempted to set up the claims of an abrogated law, and thus to interfere with the all-sufficiency of the Saviour's merits. The disciples of a philosophy falsely so called had tried to graft their oriental dreams upon the holy realities of inspired truth. The practical result was what it has always been—a lowering the standard of evangelical purity, and a disunion

* John xvii. 20, 21. † Rom. xii. 16. ‡ Rom. xv. 5.
 || Eph. iv. 3. § Phil. iii. 1, 2.

among the friends of the Redeemer. When such a condition of things as this is realized, it is high time for the sincere lover of the Saviour to look around him and to ask, What is the line of duty prescribed to us? In a divided state of the Church, an infidel and a latitudinarian spirit would say, Leave each and all to take their own way, for in the midst of such divisions no certainty can be found. Verging to the opposite extreme, Popery and Puseyism would say, An infallible head must be sought out and found somewhere, and the rights of private judgment must be surrendered. The spirit of inspiration speaking through St. Paul says neither the one nor the other. "Be of one mind." There is no allusion to any other infallibility than that of the Great Head of the Church speaking through his lively oracles; and there is not the slightest hint that union amongst the friends of the Redeemer is absolutely unattainable. There are matters on which even an inspired Apostle recognises diversity of sentiment; but there are matters also which constitute the substance of the Gospel and the rallying point of its faithful adherents. "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."* It is not so much identity of opinion on every article of faith which the Apostle enjoins, for on that principle no room would be left for the exercise of those graces of patience and forbearance which he also recommends. It is rather an unity of dependence on the only foundation, and an union of attachment to the common Saviour; for it is worthy of remark, that the divisions and discords which disturbed the Corinthian Church are not traced by the Apostle to variety of speculative tenets inculcated, but rather to the want of a right disposition of mind in the members. It was self-conceit; it was party spirit; it was a low tone of religious feeling; it was selfishness and worldly policy: it was an union of such evil influences which caused division and defiled the purity of the Church.

* Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6.

Opposite causes will produce opposite effects. If you desire that a congregation shall flourish—if you desire that the Church as a whole shall be lovely like the rose of Sharon, let the love of Christ dwell richly in each heart; let a meek and humble spirit be the badge of membership; and let the aim of all be to spend and be spent for the sake of their beloved Lord. “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity.”*

IV. This view of the matter is confirmed by the concluding exhortation of our text, “*Live in peace.*” There could be no foundation for such a precept had there been no causes in operation to disturb the peace of the Church. We can conceive it possible indeed that the Church may be still and at rest, not only by means of the removal of all those causes which occasion division, but from an absolute and entire prohibition of thinking on religious matters at all; a prostration of the human intellect before the ascendancy of mental despotism; a surrender of man’s noblest prerogative to the claims of arbitrary power. But such stillness is the stillness of death; such peace is the peace of the grave. The precept of the text is complied with, not when we attempt forcibly to remove out of the way all the real or imaginary causes of disunion; not when we seek to tie up the capacity of man for thinking, and reduce him to a mere machine;—but when in spite of all the sources of varied sentiment and action, we nevertheless cherish forbearance and brotherly love. There is no surrender of principle called for, seeing “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, *then peaceable.*†” There is only a surrender of selfish passion to be made, and a restraint to be put upon our own spirits. The temper of Diotrophes in a Church must necessarily disturb its peace and mar its interests. Such a temper must be subdued, and ministers, office-bearers, and members must become fellow-helpers to the truth. Each Christian society or church acts consistently in adhering

* 1 Cor. xvi. 13, 14. † James iii. 17.

firmly to its own avowed principles ; but the spirit which breathes in all ought to be that of the Apostle in this beautiful aspiration : “ Grace, mercy, and peace be on all them that love our Lord Jesus in sincerity. Amen.”

The promise annexed to the text is couched in the language of absolute assurance—“ The God of love and of peace shall be with you.” A Church cannot prosper if the God of love and of peace shall desert her. Ichabod will in that case be inscribed on her ruined walls. She may introduce no changes in her professed creed or form of worship—she may retain her connexion with the civil government of the land—she may carry on her services of worship nearly as before ; she may embrace a large proportion of the learning of the age—and somewhat of the piety of her better days may be seen to linger with a flickering light here and there amid her portals. But if, as a society, she has dishonoured God, and if, in righteous recompense he has forsaken her, no trifling remnants of individual worth within her pale will form an effective redeeming trait. On the other hand, the presence of the “ God of love and peace” in a Church will be the pledge and the prelude of great events. “ The God of love” will smile propitious on her humblest efforts put forth for the honour of his name. He will bless her schools of theological literature, and cheer her “ sons of the prophets” on their way. He will go forth with her Duffs, her MacKays, her MacDonalds, her Wilsons, on the broad field of Evangelistic and Missionary toil, and herald them onward to a glorious victory of faith. He will sharpen the arrows of her quiver and speed them on their path to the conscience and the heart. “ The God of peace” will remove any causes of variance which may exist within her pale. He will sweeten the fellowship of her kindred spirits. He will shed the olive branch of peace around her dwellings. The hoarse sounds of war he will make to die away before the silver trumpet of evangelical love. “ The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness,” saith God, “ shall not depart from

thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”*

Beloved brethren,—the circumstances of this day possess an interest to pastor and to people of no ordinary kind. My pastoral relation to you has been brought to a close, and I am called by the Great Head of the Church to another and far distant field. The event is replete with instruction. Let us listen to the voice with which it speaks.

It calls to *solemn retrospection*. The transfer of ministerial service from one province of the visible Church to another, was, in other days, no uncommon thing. In primitive times, the Great Head of the Church transferred, from time to time, the services of Apostles and Evangelists from one scene to another, while the instruments thus employed in varied labour and in varied provinces, listened to the Divine commission with cheerfulness, and gave a ready compliance. So it was in the days of the Protestant Reformation, both in Germany and in Britain; and when, two centuries ago, our Scottish brethren settled on the continent of Europe, or amid the woods of newly-discovered America, Scotland's Church sent some of her choicest sons to look after her scattered sheep in the wilderness. Assuredly if Paul was *right* when his heart yearned for his kinsmen, the Jews of the dispersion, we are *wrong* when we have no tears to shed over multitudes of our expatriated countrymen going down to the grave amid the sadness and the gloom of spiritual death. In the course of a century, I do not find more than two ministers of standing in the Scottish Church who were called to transfer the benefits of a lengthened experience to their countrymen of the western world. One of these held the same relation to the people of this congregation, which it has been my happiness to do. I refer to the distinguished Witherspoon, who, after twenty-four years labour in the ministry in Scotland, and eleven of these years in this place, was called to the Presidency of Princeton College, New-Jersey, where his name stands associated with those of

* Isaiah liv. 10.

Edwards, and Dickinson, and Davies ; and where, for twenty-eight years, he was most usefully employed in training up young men for the ministry. I presume there are few who will now say that the settlement of Witherspoon in America, even at the expense of his loss to Scotland, was an event to be deplored. But the relation betwixt us and Canada is closer than that betwixt Scotland and the North American States in 1768 ; and the families whom we go to serve, are many of them our own dear friends and kinsmen. Canada, moreover, is a rapidly-rising country, and its moral education and religious progress are destined to exert no slender influence upon the world at large.

It was on the 19th of July, 1811, I was ordained as pastor over you. The retrospective view of thirty-four years is a mental exercise of awful solemnity. My personal and ministerial responsibility I cannot reflect on without deep emotion. How many opportunities of usefulness neglected or carelessly improved ! How feeble the impression of holy truth on my own heart ; and how pointless the appeals which I may have attempted to make to the consciences of my hearers ! How many delightful seasons of sacred fellowship which have passed away without leaving any vivid or lasting impression ! How few instances of conversion to God ! Shall I plead that a minister is not personally responsible for the small measure of success which may attend his ministry ? This is the ordinary refuge of indolence ; the plausible plea of a low-toned personal religion. Success, unquestionably, is of God ; but God works by means, and man is responsible for the manner in which these means are applied. The longer I live, the deeper do I feel the importance of such injunctions as those which Fuller addressed to the first Missionaries to Bengal—"Attempt great things—expect great things." One cause of limited success in the Ministry is just this—Ministers do not look for success in the conversion of sinners. They are satisfied with the dull round of duty decently performed ! And, so long as we content ourselves with a low standard of aim and

effort, we may rest assured that our measure of success will be proportionally small.

The period of my ministry embraces a generation of human beings. Of those who were office-bearers and members in full communion at the time of my settlement, a fraction only survives. Of those whose names stand on the lists appended to "the call" then addressed to me, *two* only remain. Many who were then the children and the youth of families committed to my charge, have since grown up, and occupy important stations in society. The number admitted by me to communion at one hundred and thirty-four sacramental occasions, falls little short of thirteen hundred individuals—being nearly the ordinary number of communicants twice told. Of these, several hundreds had been catechumens at the weekly classes for religious instruction, and over many of these I have had cause to rejoice. In the course of my ministry, God has permitted me to go through the whole of the New Testament in the form of expository lecture, together with the evangelical types and prophecies and the larger part of the history of the old. My aim has ever been to unfold to you the mind of the spirit and to commend to every sinner the grace of the Divine Redeemer. We have walked together amid the rich pastures of Zion ; and my humble aim has been to direct you to the chief Shepherd. Do such reflections as these suggest no solemn responsibility on your part as on mine ? With the generation that has passed away, we have now nothing to do. They have gone to give in their account to the Judge of all. But we have to answer each one for himself. How many Sabbaths, with all their blissful associations, have passed over us ! How many appeals have the Providence and the Spirit of God made to your consciences and hearts ! How many affecting memorials of former days rise to view, and, like the images of departed friends, remind you of acknowledged duties neglected, and precious opportunities misapplied ! How often have the spirit and the bride said to you—Come ;—and you would not come ! "The harvest is past ; the summer is ended ; and ye are not saved."

Time is on the wing. Precious days of grace are now numbered among the things which have been. "O that thou hadst known in this thy day the things which belonged unto thy peace ; but now they are hid from thine eyes."

It is possible that some may be my hearers this day, who, for many years, sat under my ministry with professed satisfaction, but who, when conscience and truth called on me to make a sacrifice, have coolly and deliberately deserted me. Surely they cannot plead that I had imbibed erroneous doctrine, or that I had ceased to preach to them the whole counsel of God. Is there not an awful responsibility attached to those who willingly surrender the spiritual privileges of the Church, and the honours of her king, for the sake of worldly emoluments and a secularised Establishment ? who, moreover, forsake the pastor of their affections that they may place themselves under the ministry of those whose trustworthiness, forsooth, as guides to the kingdom of Heaven, has been tested by the base dereliction of principles, which they so lately counted it their honour and their glory to uphold ?

But the solemn transactions of this day cast their shadows before—they suggest matter of *devout anticipation*. If any one period of my ministry has been to my own mind happier than another, it has been the period from the eventful era of the disruption of the Church till the present hour. Difficulties which formerly stood in my way have been removed. Access to the people of my pastoral charge has become much more easy ; and the tie of relationship, while it had lost almost everything of its geographical character, had realised more perfectly its spiritual bearings. On these accounts, assuredly, the breaking up of this tie must be to me, as to you, doubly painful, while the remembrance of many hallowed associations of kindred and of friends, must add to the keenness of the separation. But the Church of our fathers has now become, more than ever, a confessing and witnessing Church. To bear witness to the same truths in another land, is the duty to which your pastor is now called, and the experience of the past may not be lost if it

is made to tell favourably on the future. You, dear brethren, maintain your principles, I trust, with a firmer grasp than that they should be weakened by any such change of circumstances as that which a change of pastoral ministry involves; and methinks, the very call which has been made upon you, and to which you have considerably responded, in place of enfeebling their impression, will add to it tenfold. It will augment their magnitude in your esteem. The very fact that the impression of these principles has been felt in its depth and intensity at the distance of many thousands of miles, and that, while our noble band of missionaries in the East have cast in their lot with us in their maintenance, so many ministers and members of the Church of Scotland in the Western Colonies, have, for the sake of them, made sacrifices of a valuable nature, —these very facts must rivet your conviction of the truth of your principles; while the record of them in the future history of the Church must form one of the finest illustrations of the “faith which overcometh the world.”

Do you anticipate any injury to Zion from her surrender of a few of her office-bearers for the sake of the general cause of Emanuel’s kingdom? The Lord has many arrows in his quiver; and these he will polish and sharpen for his own ends. He has taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come;” and surely a petition so comprehensive in its range must involve an obligation to do something in its behalf. The command is, “Go, preach the Gospel to every creature:” and surely our own brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh are not to be exempted from the classes of beings in whose behalf the command was issued. A Church has seldom flourished in spirituality which has shut herself up in all the exclusiveness of a local or even national sectarianism. If you require a test of success on the part of heralds of the cross, you may seek it with by far the fairest prospects, among the men of a missionary spirit; among the Elliots, the Brainerds, the Whitefields, and the Wesleys of other times, or those in our own day and in our own Church who have drank at the same heavenly fountain. A Church will never

prosper, in the highest and best sense, until she shake herself from the dust, put on her beautiful garments, and go forth as a heaven-born messenger to the nations.

I congratulate you on the prospect of a faithful ministry. Dark and depressing would have been my feelings had I been called to leave my native shore under the fear that my congregation might be disorganized, its peace disturbed by internal division, and its prospects marred by a divided pastoral succession. I see the hand of God in the whole management of the case. A faithful and disinterested band of office-bearers have found in you a body of candid and ready coadjutors ; and the measures adopted, promise, under God, blessed results. My prayers for you and for those who may be set over you in the Lord shall not be wanting at the heavenly throne, that the seed already sown may not be lost ; that the ministry over you may excel that which may have preceded it in faithfulness, ability, and success ; that your regular and full organization may be followed up by the active discharge of duty on the part of each and all of you ; that a larger measure of spirituality and of true religion may characterize you as a people ; and that your liberal contributions to the cause of God may be an example and a stimulus to other churches of the saints.

In conclusion, *present duty* demands our serious care. Let it be your steady determination to realize the principles of the Free Church of Scotland, not only in mental apprehension but in practical use. Let not the scoffs and jeers of the worldly and time-serving part of mankind any way move you. Return not railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. Above all, see that ye adorn the profession you make by a high-toned spirit of piety. Cherish the love of God and of the Redeemer in your hearts. Guard against worldly-mindedness, and a narrow selfish temper of mind. Let the voice of melody and rejoicing be heard from day to day in your dwellings ; and let all the duties of the closet and of the family be punctually exemplified in you. Cultivate an enlightened and enlarged spirit of faith ; ever hoping well for the church of God, and ever ready to

give as God shall prosper you to the cause for which Jesus died. "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel."*

"Finally, brethren, farewell ; Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind ; live in peace ; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Amen.

* Phil. i. 27.



